

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration of the objections and rejections that are contained within the Office Action of June 15, 2007 is respectfully requested.

The Examiner rejected claims 27-29, 38, 42 and 44 as being anticipated by Kuhns, U.S. Patent Publication 2004/0119593. Claims 30 and 32 were rejected as being unpatentable over Kuhns and in further view of Otaki, U.S. Patent Publication 2003/0059565. Claims 39 and 40 were further rejected as being unpatentable over Kuhns in combination with Nishikawa, JP 7-74497. Alternatively, claim 40 was rejected as being unpatentable over Kuhns in combination with Mikami, U.S. Patent Publication 2003/0178124. Claim 43 was rejected as being unpatentable over Kuhns in combination with Suzuki, U.S. Patent 6,110,595. However, it is respectfully submitted that the present invention clearly distinguishes over all of these references.

By the above amendments, further changes to the claims have been made so as to even further distinguish over the prior art. In particular, both claims 27 and 44 now recite that the first adhesive holding region has a first surface coarseness and is operable to hold the circuit board with a first tackiness that corresponds to such first surface coarseness. Further, the second adhesive holding region has second surface coarseness that is different from the first surface coarseness and operable to hold the circuit board with the second tackiness, which corresponds to the second surface coarseness. The second surface coarseness is different from the first tackiness, and the first and second adhesive holding regions are coplanar.

In addition, both the claims recite that both the tackiness between the first adhesive holding region and the main body and the tackiness between the second adhesive holding region and the main body are larger than the first tackiness and the second tackiness. In other words, the first and second adhesive holding regions require a smaller force to peel an object off of their regions than the force between such regions and the main body to which they are applied. The main body, it is noted, is formed by planar base plate 11 of pallet 1a.

Support for this limitation can be found in the original specification referring initially to paragraph 9 on page 6. This paragraph states that, as can be seen from Fig. 2, the pallet 1a has a structure such that an adhesive holding layer 12 formed of an adhesive material is glued onto a planar

base plate 11, which serves as a main body. As described in paragraph 10, a first adhesive holding region 21 has low tackiness and a second adhesive holding region 22 has a higher tackiness than the first adhesive holding region 21. Tackiness is the value corresponding to a force which is required to peel off an object which has adhered to the adhesive holding layer under certain conditions, and thus serves as a measure of adhesion. As described in paragraph 12, the differences between the tackiness can be realized by varying the surface coarseness of the adhesive material. Reference is made to Table 1. From the general discussion of the specification that the FPC 9 is mounted on and then peeled off of the adhesive holding regions, the adhesive holding regions remain on the main body. This clearly means that the tackiness between the main body and the adhesive holding regions is greater than the so-called first and second tackiness of such first and second regions for holding the circuit board.

Support in the specification is borne out by the description of the operation with respect to Figs. 4-7. Note in particular the discussion in section 30 on page 15 of the specification describing how a circuit board is peeled off, then the pallet 1a has the adhesive holding layer 12 cleaned, and then the pallet 1a is moved to a position to be reused. Literal support for the limitations of claims 27 and 44 has been provided at the end of paragraph 31 on page 16 of the original specification (the change having been effected with respect to the substitute specification).

The above amendments serve to even further distinguish over the cited reference to Kuhns.

The Examiner notes that Kuhns has first and second adhesive holding regions 19a and 19b, and that they can have varying adhesive strengths. However, Kuhns provides no disclosure of the different adhesive strengths for such first and second regions being the result of the different coarseness of such regions. Accordingly, both claims 27 and 44 recite that the first adhesive holding region has a first surface coarseness with a first tackiness corresponding thereto, and that the second adhesive holding region has a second surface coarseness, different from the first surface coarseness, operable to hold the circuit board with the second tackiness corresponding to the second surface coarseness and different from the first tackiness.

In addition, the limitation that has been added to both independent claims reciting that the tackiness of both the first and second adhesive holding regions with respect to the main body is

larger than the first and second tackiness, which is due to the respective surface coarseness. In the present invention, in order to allow a circuit board to be attached to and removed from a substrate holder on a repeated basis, the tackiness between each adhesive holding region and the main body is required to be larger than the tackiness between the adhesive holding region and the circuit board to be adhered to it. Thus, the recitation that the tackiness between the respective adhesive holding regions and the main body is larger than the tackiness of the first and second adhesive holding regions reflects the fact that the substrate holder is intended to be reused on a repeated basis, which is quite different from Kuhns.

The Examiner states that the recited main body of claims 27 and 44 corresponds to a liner provided on the surface of the adhesive layer 19 described in paragraph 41 of Kuhns. However, the tackiness between the liner and the adhesive layer is smaller than the tackiness between the adhesive layer 19 and the substrate 14. Thus, Kuhns cannot meet the above claim limitation.

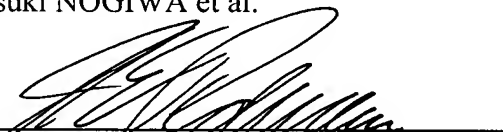
As discussed in the last response, none of the secondary references cited by the Examiner address the issue of different surface coarseness. Nor do they address the deficiencies that have been discussed above. Applicants reserve all rights to address any and all such secondary references as may be necessary. However, at this point it seems that the distinctions between the present invention as recited in claims 27 and 44 and all of the references cited by the Examiner is quite clear. Indication of the allowability of all of such claims is, accordingly, requested.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and the Examiner is requested to pass the case to issue. If the Examiner should have any comments or suggestions to help speed the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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